



Knights of Peter Claver Celebrates 100 Years!



Distinguished members of the Knights of Peter Claver, St. Martin de Porres Council #266 from St. Martin de Porres Church in New Haven and St. Benedict's Council #311 from St. Michael Church, Hartford march in procession, at the Cathedral of St. Joseph, at the annual Black History Month Mass, sponsored by the Office for Black Catholic Ministries, Archdiocese of Hartford.

There have been great difficulties black people have had to overcome throughout their history in America. It was just as challenging to be black AND Catholic. Discrimination and injustice did not end at the doors into the church. This was the painful reality for black Catholics in our country.

Often the insurmountable challenges drove black men away from the Church and into fraternal organizations such as Freemasons as a means of self-preservation and foster-

ing the feelings of self-worth.

These organizations also insulated many black people from violence and discrimination by giving them places of social acceptance. Frequently many black Catholics left the faith to find an accepting congregation of welcoming Christians, whose faith and social structure would accept them as full members.

The Josephite priests, who were missionaries to black people in the south worked in vain to convince black Catholic men to return to the Catholic Church. The men told the priests that they would gladly leave the fraternities if there was another organization to which they could turn, to find acceptance and empowerment. The priests decided that a new Catholic fraternity, that would accept men regardless of their color, would be formed. This newly formed organization would include all the fraternal and beneficial qualities that existed in other organizations but would also provide care for the many impoverished black people that received very little care from state run agencies.

On November 7, 1909, four Josephite priests and three laymen established the Knights of Peter Claver in Mobile, Alabama. The Knights of Peter Claver, Council No. 1 initiated 40 new members that very evening and before the end of the month, two more Councils were formed. The Josephite Fathers pledged to stand with this fledgling

group of men and to do all in their power to increase the membership in the Knights of Peter Claver and the Catholic Church.

One hundred years since that pledge, and what was a small and improbable group remains a vibrant voice for people of color in our church and service to the entire community. With continued strong support from the Josephite priests and slow but steady support from the larger church in America, there are now over 700 subordinate units and over 18,000 Catholic family members who have joined the Knights throughout the United States and into South America.

In 1917 Junior Knights were authorized to offer young men the opportunity to give service to the community and to join a Catholic youth group. In 1926 the Ladies Auxiliary Division was established. Junior Daughters Division and Junior Knights Divisions were formally established in 1930 and 1935, respectively.

In the Archdiocese of Hartford there are two churches that have Knights and Ladies of Peter Claver; they are St. Martin de Porres in New Haven Council No. 266 which was established in 1985 and St. Benedict Council No. 311 at St Michael's Church in Hartford was established in 1989. Both Councils also established the Ladies Auxiliary Divisions in 1985 and 1990, respectively.

Continued on Page 3

Inside this issue:

<i>Candlelight Vigil for Darfur, Sudan</i>	2
<i>Food Pantry Ministries</i>	2
<i>OBCM at Annual Catholic Schools Exhibition</i>	3
<i>Children, Our Most Precious Gift</i>	3
<i>Bible Quiz Time</i>	4
<i>Save These Dates</i>	4

**SPECIAL ADDITIONAL INSERT ~
 HOPE FOR HAITI**

**We love God in the
 measure that we
 practice it.**

Sr. Therese of the Infant Jesus

Candlelight Vigil for Darfur, Sudan



There are many issues that confront us as members of the Catholic Church, as citizens of this country and as global citizens. As believers in Christ and members of His church we are obliged to embrace the basic of what Christ has taught us... That is "To love thy neighbor" ... This commandment from God is preached in the Old Testament as well as by Christ and His followers in the New Testament. The whole point of Christ's salvific journey was his bringing to bear His sacrificial and complete

love for us all, and our following that example. With that as the core of His teachings His request for us to love as He has loved is imperative. However in its application we so often fall short... Loving one another during prosperous times is difficult. During times of distress, self-concern and poverty, loving thy neighbor becomes nearly impossible for us to accomplish. During difficult times our concerns turn to self-interest, self-preservation. Abraham Maslow's theory on the hierarchy of needs illustrates these fundamental motivations. Wherein he states that a person's most important personal need must be satisfied before a lesser need can be addressed. He then identifies the most important need as that of survival. After securing one's physiological and safety needs (i.e. air, water, food and shelter) we then are able to look at the needs of the community. And yet there is God calling us to look beyond our secular understanding of loving our community; which is, wait until you are secure in your own right before helping someone else. Christ calls us to a radical love...and when we respond to that radical type of love...then loving your neighbor becomes more grace-filled, more precious. Particularly when our world seems broken. It seems that is the most important time to share one's love with one's community. On December 21, 2009, the day on which the light of day is the shortest, there was a candle-light vigil for peace in The Sudan. It took place at 6:00 PM on Albany Avenue in front of St. Joseph College, in West Hartford. People from around the state gathered to express our concerns about the loss of peace in our world. It does not matter how far away pain and suffering occurs we are called to pray and act as the Christians we claim to be...

Food Pantry Ministries

The week before Thanksgiving was surprisingly warm. Warm enough that the long line of people who gathered at the closed side door of the church waiting for the bags of food to be given were not huddled together for warmth. They stood patiently, anticipating that the doors would soon open. Many of those who gathered at St. Michael's Catholic Church on the Northend of Hartford were there for the first time, for in the last year the number of people who have needed help has risen as quickly as our economy has fallen. Earlier in the year, at the urging of former pastor Fr. Fran Snell, the food pantry at St. Michael's increased the food distribution from monthly to weekly. The dedicated parishioners who have devoted themselves to this ministry have been untiring in their efforts to clothe the naked and feed the hungry. For over 25 years the Social Justice committee along with the overwhelming generosity of many Catholic Churches has fed tens' of thousands of the hungry on the Northend of Hartford. Most city churches have or are starting programs for the needy, if you would like to help please call 860-243-0648. Your hard work is needed during these hard times.



“There was a rich man who...dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man...who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table.”

Luke 16:19-21a

Continued from Front Page

Council No. 1 hosted the official Knights of Peter Claver Centennial Celebration November 6 - 8 in Mobile, AL with a Founders' Day Mass. In August, more than 2000 Claverites attended the Knights' national convention in New Orleans. The Mass held at the New Orleans Convention Center drew over 5000 people. Father Ed Chiffriller, superior general of the Josephites, homilist at the Mass stated that he continues to be amazed at the way in which black Catholics persevered in their faith despite the indignities of having to sit in separate black-only pews and waiting until all whites had received Communion before approaching the Communion rail. In spite all of this; they remained faithful to their trust in God and their Catholic faith.



Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary, St. Martin de Porres Court #266, New Haven and St. Benedict's Court #311, Hartford in combined procession at three different annual OBCM Black History Month Mass at the Cathedral of St. Joseph, Hartford.

OBCM at Annual Catholic Schools Exhibition



OBCM booth at Catholic Schools Exhibition at St. Paul School in Bristol.



Teachers of the Archdiocese visit the OBCM booth at Catholic Schools Exhibition at St. Paul School in Bristol.

Each year the Office for Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of Hartford, sponsors the Catholic Educators Conference, hosted by St. Paul School in Bristol. The Office for Black Catholic Ministries was among the 57 exhibitors this year who shared information and showcased all things relating to school life, including books, uniforms, photo sessions, computer programs, fundraising opportunities, etc. Our Office focused on confronting the more challenging subjects such as Social Justice, Diversity Training, and Bullying, by informing the teachers about lecture opportunities by Deacon Art Miller, director of OBCM.

We also had lots of fun selling Faith Rocks, which teachers would use to inspire their students, and Kindness Coins, which they would use to reward students when they do the right thing. Both the coins and the rocks were big hits. Next year we plan to have more available in the form of books on Black Saints and Black Catholicism and posters of the same.

The opportunity that God sends, does not wake up those who are asleep.

African Proverb.

Children, Our Most Precious Gift

It has been said that:

If children live with **criticism**, they learn to **condemn**.

If they live with **hostility**, they learn to **fight**.

If children live with **ridicule**, they learn to be **shy**.

If they live with **shame**, they learn to feel **guilty**.

However:

If children live with **tolerance**, they learn to be **patient**.

If they live with **encouragement**, they learn **confidence**.

If children live with **fairness**, they learn **justice**.

If they live with **approval**, they learn to **like themselves**.

Investing in children is determining our own destiny. Children really do live what they learn from us.

ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD
OFFICE FOR BLACK CATHOLIC MINISTRIES



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www.archdioceseofhartford.org
Other Links of Interest
www.nbccongress.org & www.usccb.org

SAVE these DATES

- **January 18, 2010: ANNUAL ARCHDIOCESAN DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, Jr. DAY MASS.**
 Sponsored by the Office for Black Catholic Ministries. **Cathedral of St. Joseph, 9 am.**
- **February 14, 2010: ANNUAL ARCHDIOCESAN BLACK HISTORY MONTH MASS**
 Sponsored by the Office for Black Catholic Ministries. **Cathedral of St. Joseph, 2pm.**
- **February 21, 2010: ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH MASS**
St. Michael Church, Hartford, 9am
- **February 28, 2010: ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH MASS**
St. Martin de Porres Church, New Haven.

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Bible Quiz Time

MOUNTAINS

1. Noah's ark rested in the mountains of _____.
2. While Moses was tending his flock near _____, the mountain of God, he saw the burning bush.
3. Moses climbed Mount _____ in Moab and died
4. Saul and his sons died during a fierce battle on Mount _____.
5. Solomon built a grand temple in Jerusalem on Mount _____.
6. After the Lord had the Last supper with His disciples, they went to the Mount of _____.
7. In Psalm 48, Mount _____ is praised as the beautiful city of the Great King.

See answers below

Answers: 1). Ararat, Genesis 8:4; 2). Horeb, Exodus 3:1-2; 3). Nebo, Exodus 31:1-5; 4). Gilboa, 1 Samuel 3:1-2; 5). Moriah, 2 Chronicles 3:1; 6). Olivet, Matthew 26:30; 7). Zion, Psalm 48:2